

An analysis of Torben Søndergaard's meeting in Moncton, NB

by Danny Lirette

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Opening Statement:

By nature I'm a critical of supernatural claims; you should be also! The Word of God warns us that false prophets would rise up and show great signs and wonders in order to deceive the very elect of the God. We must be ever so discerning when an alleged "healing evangelist" etc comes to our city to proclaim that mighty acts are being done in the Name of Jesus.

I want to take some time now to analyze Torben Søndergaard's meetings in Moncton, NB. Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church (*with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*) in Moncton hosted this man. Is Torben the "real deal" or is he a false teacher? I can say from the outset that I believe Torben is sincere yet at the same time his ministry contains very troubling aspects to it.

I don't for one moment believe that the meetings were "all bad". I have had wonderful reports come back to me and for this, I praise God! It's a joy to know that there were some awesome things being taught and taking place. That in and of itself, however, is not the test of truth. When truth is mixed with blatant error, we need to objectively make certain that we're "not" being deceived. Deception "is" when truth is being presented "with" error.

For those of you who attended his conference, I plead with you to use objectivity as opposed to an emotional "But I was there and saw lives change!" attitude. I have no doubt that lives were changed; yet I have no doubt that there was a mixture of both truth and error.

I am under no deception that this article will bring me into the crosshairs of those who uplift Torben as a mighty Man of God; there are those who are so taken with this man that any criticism of him will be seen as an "attack of satan" against the work of God in and through Torben. This comes with the territory of being in the church. There are always those who demand strict agreement with their views. Towards such people I can only feel a sense of sorrow, knowing that in upholding a man without objectively testing his fruit will indeed bring these people into deeper deception.

1- A dishonesty in reporting:

Torben produced a video of about 90-10 people being baptized. What you are *not* told is that the majority of these people have been saved for years. Why they are being baptized again is beyond me. What's most troubling is that Torben makes it *appear* as though these are brand new/first time conversions. Nothing could be further from the truth. These are primarily conference attendees who are *already*

regenerated. Now whether or not one plays on semantics with whether a baptism is valid or not (hence, "re"-baptism), the fact that the video fails to bring in context is disturbing and troubling; this speaks to a very clear dishonesty. Notice how those being baptized have a keen knowledge of Christian terminology. Why is this? It's because they *are* Christians. What did Torben say/teach to cause them to question their standing in Jesus Christ? The Apostle Paul dealt with similar issues in the Galatian church when he wrote:

Galatians 3:1-3 "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

You see, Torben is a baptismal regenerationist while 1 Peter 3:21 says that water baptism does NOT cleanse us of the filth of the flesh:

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"

Yes; baptism saves us but "no" ... not from the filth of the flesh. What is the filth of the flesh? Galatians 5 speaks of the works of the flesh (fornication, adultery, etc) and we're told that while baptism saves us it does "not" save us from our sins; pretty clear! It saves us, according to 1 Peter 3:21, from a condemned conscience. The filth of the flesh is:

Galatians 5:19-21 " Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

1 Peter 3:21 is clear that water baptism does "not" save from the filth of the flesh (sin); how then can Torben teach that it does? It's quite simple. He's taken the Book of Acts and holds it as his doctrinal positional rather than as a historical record of the Early Church. This is called Eisegesis. That is when one reads into a text what the author did not intend. 1 Peter 3:21 is quite clear on what water baptism is and it's certainly "not" essential for Salvation. Yes; it's more than symbol; no, it's not Salvation. It's the answer of a good conscience towards God; "that" is what water baptism does. (*See footnote below*)

Torben holds that water baptism is essential for Salvation itself while we are told the opposite in the passage above. In his thinking, those who do not hold to baptism as being essential to salvation must be re-baptized. This is rank and file error and must be opposed. These "baptisms" are mostly Believers being baptized; not new converts. How he ever convinced Christians to get re-baptized is a mystery to me yet here he does it on video and treats the event as though these people are non Christians. How Holy Spirit Filled Christians could be duped into having to get "re" baptized is something I will never understand. Those who are "just" saved are to be water baptized. Are these "re" baptized Believers who were in ministry, speaking in tongues etc claiming that up until the Parlee Beach Baptisms that they were all fakes? It would appear so. I don't believe that they were fakes but this is the objective logical conclusion. One is only baptized once one is saved; thus, are these people saying their entire Christian lives were a sham up until Torben "re" baptized them? Were those who preached prior to being baptized by Torben admitting by their actions that they weren't even saved at all? Run for your spiritual lives, brothers and sisters and avoid those who fall into such error. Yes; some "may" have not been saved and had to be "re" baptized but for the most part, those in this video were "already" saved and Spirit filled. Well... until Torben convinced them otherwise. It may make for great Youtube watching but it's certainly not honest. It's dishonesty in reporting, quite frankly.

2- Unconfirmed healings:

In an alleged healing clip, a young lady by the name of Marcia claims to have been healed. I'm certainly not one to rain on anyone else's parade yet I'm so grieved at this clip! If this young lady is indeed healed, shouldn't we wait until a medical doctor confirms this? If the healing is legitimate then there should be no fear in having the medical professional confirm the healing... right? In posting this young lady's "healing" without any objective medical evidence, Torben joins the ranks of false teachers such as Benny Hinn. Torben has unwittingly exploited this young lady. If she's "not" healed she may feel the need to perform and "deny her symptoms". I would caution anyone who attended not to jump the gun and declare a healing that may have been merely an emotional rush. I'm not saying it was... God forbid! What I am saying is that I'm holding off my hand clapping until the *doctor's report comes in* and is published for all of us to see. In Luke 17:12-14 we're shown the example of verification when we read:

"And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."

I feel horribly bad for this young lady; putting her on camera and asking her to testify of a physical healing that may in fact not be a physical healing at all. Before you call me a pessimist.. produce medical documentation that shows she's indeed healed. Some may ask "Who are YOU to claim she isn't healed?!" while my response would be "Who is anyone to claim she IS healed?". I'd love to rejoice "with" you... but at this point I'm a bit put off at the showmanship of Torben and his exploitation of a young lady.

While she may or may not be healed, "if" she in fact is "not" healed then I'm sure she'll be told to deny her symptoms, confess healing, etc etc. If/when it's confirmed she is "not" healed, she'll be told she "lost her healing". Deceived, deluded and mean spirited people will give a thousand reasons "why" this precious young lady has not been healed. One thing they will continue to do is to say, "She was healed... but she lost it!".

If this precious girl is reading this, I want to address you personally: Do NOT "confess" your healing if you aren't healed. If you have the symptoms of your disease, ask yourself if those JESUS touched continued to have "their" symptoms. You know the answer. It's ok if you aren't healed and it's equally ok if you are. One thing is certain; Torben took advantage of you and perhaps you're in denial "or" you are healed. Either way, I encourage you to get medical documentation and show the church in Moncton that this is a real deal miracle. If it is, I rejoice with you. If not, you have nothing to feel bad about. You didn't "lose" your healing; Torben deceived you and it's a life lesson. You're precious to Jesus and to His real Church.

The moment that medical documentation is given, I will be the first to testify that a genuine miracle occurred; I have no issue doing that. Until then, however, merely not experiencing symptoms is not objective evidence of anything. Let's not be too quick to rush to conclusions. We should be neither for nor against this claimed healing; we should take a "wait and see" approach.

Where did Jesus ever pray for a single person who "lost" their healing? If healing is a free gift... you do NOT keep it by works (confessing, denying, etc). No healed person ever got sick again after being touched by Jesus and yet multitudes of professing Christians today claim you can "lose your healing". This is merely bad theology that makes healing a work we "do" and not a gift that God "gives".

3- A counterfeit spirit at work:

In one clip filmed at the Torben meeting, a woman apparently is filled with the Holy Spirit and has a demon cast out of her. What was actually witnessed is a false spirit moving in this situation. It certainly was not the Holy Spirit of the

Scriptures moving through these people in tongues that go like this: "dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee"! In Acts 2 when someone was filled they spoke in languages; the woman at this evening was blabbering in gibberish and it's a mockery to the genuine Filling of the Holy Spirit as seen in Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10, Acts 19 and Ephesians 5. To liken what happened in this clip to a "move of God" shows an utter ignorance of who the Holy Spirit is and how the Holy Spirit works. Blabbering on and on and declaring that such a thing is the work of the Holy Spirit is the reason why so many non Charismatics/Pentecostals and unBelievers mock us. This is "not" the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. The genuine Baptism in the Holy Spirit can come with speaking in tongues and if so, it will be actual languages; not blabbering "dee dee dee dee dee" over and over again.

Acts 2:6 "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."

What took place at the Torben meeting in relation to the filling of the Holy Spirit is clear demonstrative evidence of a counterfeit filling at work. The poor woman in the meeting was subjected to manipulation and exploitation; it was nothing more than emotional nonsense. If one cannot tell the difference between the genuine Baptism in the Holy Spirit and a false baptism in the Holy Spirit... we need to get back to our Bibles. What was taking place was so utterly "not" of God that to support it being "from" God is nonsense. Torben believes in and rejoices in people blabbering syllables when we see that actual languages accompanied the Baptism in the Holy Spirit at times. Where is this man's discernment? In fact, it *doesn't* take discernment to see how foolish and how dishonouring to the Lord this is. This poor woman now believes she's filled with the Holy Spirit, thus effectively stopping her from seeking the genuine filling of the Holy Spirit.

4- Where's the Gospel?

In one published video, Torben followers (Glad Tidings Moncton attenders) speak about going into the mall and seeing healings take place. The first testimony is the old "growing leg miracle". For those of you within the Charismatic/Pentecostal worldview, you "know" that the "growing leg miracle" is a mainstay within our camp. I have a very hard time believing such a thing. I have personally witnessed this once in my life and saw it medically verified before my eyes. Every single other time, without exception, I saw nothing but a sham; no verification, no growing... nothing. And the crazy thing is that when the preacher says, "Did you see it grow?!" the bystanders, so as not to be the pessimist, always say, "Yes! Wow! What a miracle!". Everyone walks away more deluded than they were

before. In the other testimonies in the published video clip here's what's missing: (1) Any mention of the Gospel being preached and (2) any mention of actual Salvations. Jesus isn't the focus here and neither is His Gospel. The Word is clear; there will be false prophets raised up by satan in the Last Days who will show "great" signs and wonders in order to deceive the very elect of God:

Matthew 24:24 "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

I am certainly not suggesting that Torben is a false prophet; what I am suggesting is that these "miracle testimonies" are not to be the focus and yet they are. Did even one of these individuals repent and get baptized? I pray that at least one did! The problem? They're glorifying healings; not the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm certainly not claiming that they did "not" preach the Gospel; I have no idea. What I am saying is that in their testimonies they make no reference to the Person of Jesus; they speak only of healings. Is this what we're called to do, glorify healings on video for the world to see while we're not even sure if the ones allegedly "healed" turned from sin to Christ?

There was a woman on Saturday evening who was in a wheelchair being prayed for. Do you think she's now out of her wheelchair? No; she isn't. It's easy to "heal" headaches and backaches; let me see a woman in a wheelchair get up and then we'll talk about the real deal power of God. Why didn't the woman on Saturday evening get up and walk? I mean, everyone else was being healed of non-verifiable pain. This would have been the miracle of miracles in Torben's meeting... but it wasn't to be. I guess God forgot about this poor woman while healing everyone else's back issues.

Closing Statement:

The above 4 points greatly disturb me and they should greatly disturb you. While I understand that some of you who attended this conference will immediately ignore the concerns raised, objectivity demands fruit inspection. Where is the fruit? We have none as of yet. Where is the Gospel? I have no doubt it was preached and I also have no doubt that in the midst of these issues the Lord worked out His Will; however, the clips themselves lack the Gospel, lack the exultation of Jesus Christ and focus on healing and miracles. This is a case of Matthew 7:21-23 which says:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

The focus of those in this passage was "not" the Lord Jesus but what Jesus was doing. Prophecy, healing, casting out demons and doing good works were the emphasis of these lost people; they had a focus on the the things of God "rather than" God Himself. How does Jesus respond?

"I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

1- Jesus "never" knew them. They weren't backsliders who fell away; they were "always" lost.

2- The evidence that they were lost was that they were "workers of iniquity". This means they were law breakers; they practiced sin. Yet, at the same time as holding onto sin, they "also" prophesied, healed the sick, cast out demons and did good works.

I have no doubt whatsoever that Torben is a sincere man; I have no doubt that he loves the Lord. I cannot and will not judge this man's walk with Jesus. I can, and must - as you can and must - test his ministry against the Word of God. In the light of Scripture, Torben's ministry is strewn with error, exploitation and emotional manipulation.

As a minister of the Gospel; as a Believer in Jesus Christ... I cannot support a ministry such as Torben's for the reasons I listed and others not listed. The above 4 points should give you pause; your heart should weep and your spirit tremble that healings are glorified; no medical documentation is provided; Christians are being presented as new converts being baptized; water baptism is held to a higher standard than the Cross; Jesus is rarely mentioned at all and only in passing.

Maranatha.

In Him,

Dan

Footnote: While water baptism is not essential for Salvation - as God saves apart from water - it is also much more than a mere symbol as most churches teaches.

Water Baptism is part and parcel of receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38-39; Acts 10; Acts 19; 1 Peter 3:21) just as faith and repentance are. These three - faith, repentance and water baptism - are the three things that God calls and commands all people to do in order to receive Salvation. Does God save apart from water baptism? Of course (Acts 10; 1 Peter 3:21) yet water baptism is a command; it's also identifying with Jesus Christ's own death, burial and resurrection and when we come up out of the water we're to walk in newness of life by the Power of the Holy Spirit at work within us (Romans 6).